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name of Marawa ("spider") given to one of the early *Tamate* Societies which may be entered by a baby in arms.[1]

The other extension is more interesting, since it provides a connexion between the spider's web and the mortuary labyrinth mythology of Seniang, in South-West Bay. In the mythology of that area the Guardian Ghost sits by a cave on the sea-shore, having drawn beside her on the sand a labyrinth figure which the ghost of the dead man on his way to the Land of the Dead must know how to complete. If he cannot do this, she eats him. The drawing of labyrinth designs, based on the above myth but now largely secular in character, is a common pastime all over the Northern New Hebrides, where they are drawn with the finger in ashes or sand.[2] It is easy to understand how the spider's web spun by the Guardian Ghost in one area should become associated with the labyrinth design drawn by the Guardian Ghost in another. A tale combining both motives comes from South Raga, and relates how one day the deity, there called Barkulkul, when leaving his house, left his wife in it and "shut the door by making, with a liana, a design similar to a spider's web." When he came back, finding the design disturbed, he went to the men's house, where he said to the men, "Let us make drawings." They made drawings in the ashes, similar to spiders' webs, and when Barkulkul saw that his brother Marrelul made the same design as Barkulkul himself had made, he knew that it was he who had entered his house in his absence and seduced his wife. And so he killed him.[3] This story is, of course, a degraded one, but serves to show the widespread symbolism of the spider's web as a labyrinthine structure with a devouring monster in its midst.

Guardian Ghost as "Megapode."

Another interesting piece of symbolism in connexion with the Guardian Ghost is that found in North Raga, where Subwe is also called Malau,[4] which means bush-turkey, or megapode. This remarkable bird has huge claws, with which it digs long tunnels into the ground in which to lay its eggs.[5] The habits of the bird are largely nocturnal, and at night it emits wailing cries. These cries are associated with ghosts, and the tunnelling activity recalls the underground world where the Guardian Ghost lives, which, in the case of Vao, is, as we shall see, a cave. Yet further, the megapode favours volcanic soil on account of the extra warmth it supplies for hatching eggs,[6] and volcanoes are also, as we shall see, connected with

[1] Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 110. [2] See Chapter XXV. [3] Tattevin, 2, 1929, p. 988.
[4] Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 189. Compare also Atimis Malau in South-West Bay.
[5] The New Hebridean megapode, *megapodius layardi*, does not build mounds like other members of the species (see p. 752). In Matanavat on the north coast of Malekula, the bird, there called *mola*, is semi-sacred. "If one village gives a scrub-turkey to another, that is a token of permanent peace." Such exchange is there even more sacred than the exchange of hawks (Harrisson, 2, p. 55).
[6] Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 461.

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number of dead on both sides is equal. Thus, if, in revenge for a man murdered for adultery or whatever his offence may have been, the injured party succeed in killing one man of the murderer's clan (whether the murderer himself is a matter of no import), then honour is satisfied, and a peace may be concluded till some fresh fatal act sets the ball rolling again. This process of equalising out by revenging one death by another is called *simbaten*. Thus, if A has killed B, then the clansmen of B will attempt to avenge him by killing a clansman of A, and, if successful, the avenger will call out as he kills him "*Simbaten A*," meaning "Equivalent for the death of A." [1] The word appears to be related to *simbean*, meaning "anniversary," [2] both words including the concept of repetition.

If, however, in the affray the injured party kill two men of the other side, so that one party now has one dead and the other two, there can be no peace till the winning party has lost another man. This is the case whatever party may be the victor, whether that of the originally murdered man or his avengers. Subsequent affrays may equal out the number of dead, in which case peace may be restored. On the other hand, they may only increase the discrepancy between the number killed on either side, and thus lead inevitably to further conflict. This leads to several interesting results. In the first place, it is only the most injured party that has any desire to continue the war, wars of conquest being, as I have said, and as is clear from the above, out of the question. A second result is even more curious from our point of view. For, as will be seen, it is thus not the vanquished but the victors that henceforth go in terror of their lives. Moreover, among other warlike activities is the ravaging of the enemy's gardens, and it will be remembered that the Small Islanders are particularly vulnerable in this respect since their gardens are all on the mainland and therefore completely unprotected at night, unless their owners care to spend the night in the bush far from their island homes. Thus a prolonged war injures the victors, if they are Small Islanders, even more than the vanquished. The price paid for victory, both in empty stomachs and in taut nerves, is therefore sometimes so high that it is not the vanquished but the victors who must sue for peace. But the rule demanding an equal number of dead on both sides robs them of all power of obtaining it by any means known to more highly civilised communities. The only solution, therefore, is that they should themselves offer one of their number as victim to restore the balance demanded by the honour of both parties. So they seek out the least desirable member of their own clan, approach him from behind, seize him, truss him up like a pig, decorate him for sacrifice, and send him to the enemy, those who deliver him bearing a cycas leaf, emblem of peace. As a rule, the victim is sent, if possible, alive, and it is said that the enemy thus appeased force him to dig a pit for the fire in which he is to be roasted, and then sacrifice him

[1] See p. 611. [2] See p. 557.

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with all the ritual due to an enemy captured in battle,[1] and then eat him. Sometimes, however, he may be killed first, as shown by the following account dealing with the close of one of the early wars between the villages of Pete-hul and Togh-vanu following Na-va-gharu-kalat's challenge at the foundation of Pete-hul.

Human victim sent as peace-offering from Pete-hul to Togh-vanu.

This war was caused in the first place by a couple of Pete-hul men attempting to seduce the wife of a Togh-vanu man named Miren-mal while she was grating coconuts in her garden on the mainland. When he challenged them, they shot him, and this was the occasion of a long-drawn-out war between the two villages. Many were killed on both sides till they were weary of fighting. At last the Pete-hul men made up their minds to send a peace-offering in order to end the war. So they decided on a youth named Ewur, and, enticing him to climb a *ni-ra* tree for the fruit, they shot at him. But they missed, and the doomed youth sprang from the tree and made off into the bush. He had, of course, no chance, and was eventually shot down and sent as a peace-offering to Togh-vanu, where his dead body was duly "sacrificed" according to custom. The manner of such "sacrifice" will be described later in the section on cannibalism.[2] The process may not seem very pretty from our point of view, but it at least prevents further bloodshed and kills off the weakest instead of the strongest.[3]

Small number of dead in old-time warfare.

With regard to the number of men killed in battle, it must not be forgotten that all this fighting goes on, as a rule, in thick bush or on the

[1] See p. 414.

[2] See pp. 622-4.

[3] Speiser (3, p. 238, quoting from *Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides*, 1909) records a peacemaking scene after a war lasting several years between the Small Islands of Wala and Rano. The Wala men were still a death ahead of the Rano people, who would only consent to peace on the condition of having a Wala man handed over to them to be killed and eaten. When the missionaries (with the authority of a man-o'-war behind them) intervened, their next proposal was that, as they might not have him dead, they would accept a Wala lad "not to kill, but to become a Rano man." The Wala men, however, refused this, and, after much bargaining, agreed instead to hand over a circle-tusker and ten smaller pigs of specified grades. The Rano men grudgingly accepted this, and came over to Wala, but would not land till one extra fat pig was added to the number. Then a Wala man made a speech "lauding the Rano men and saying how much they were esteemed by Wala. He also spoke at length of the splendid present of exceedingly valuable pigs that they were going to hand over to their friends of Rano, and so on. A Rano man replied rather shortly. Privately they had grumbled about the pigs. They were not up to the promises made; but they agreed to take them. . . . Next morning canoes went over from island to island—the first time for some years—and gradually the old friendly relations were resumed."

Somerville (quoted by Wedgwood, 1) records from the Small Island of Uripiv a case of the opposite nature, in which the vanquished sent a small boy as peace-offering to the victors. I know of no other such case, however, in the Small Islands, and am inclined to think this is a mistake.